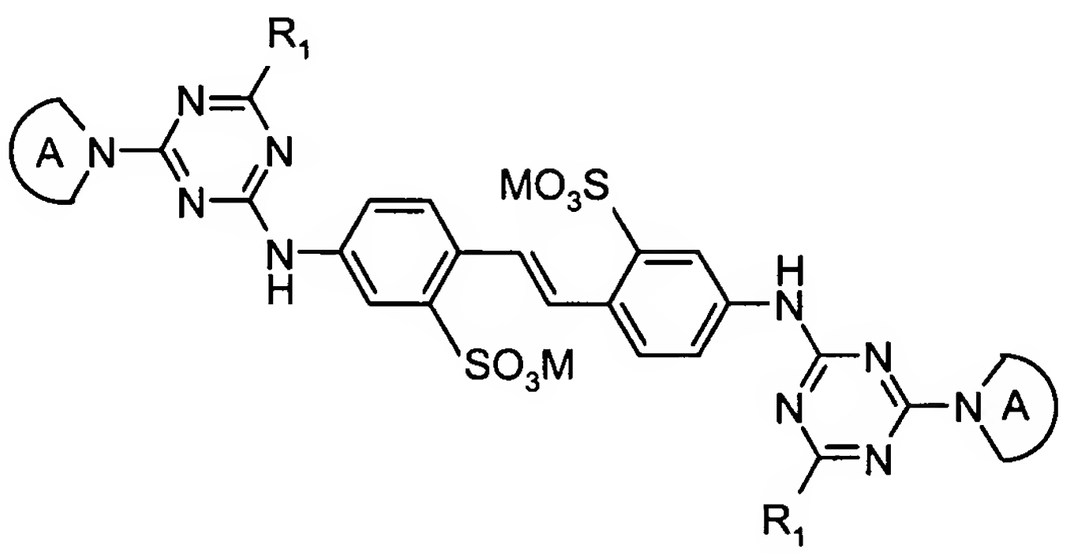
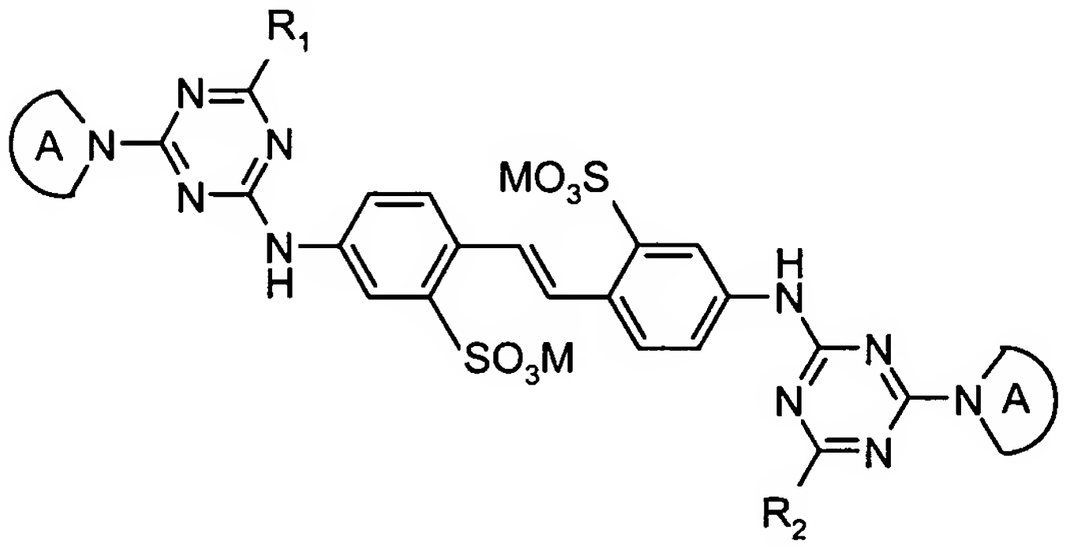
In the Claims:

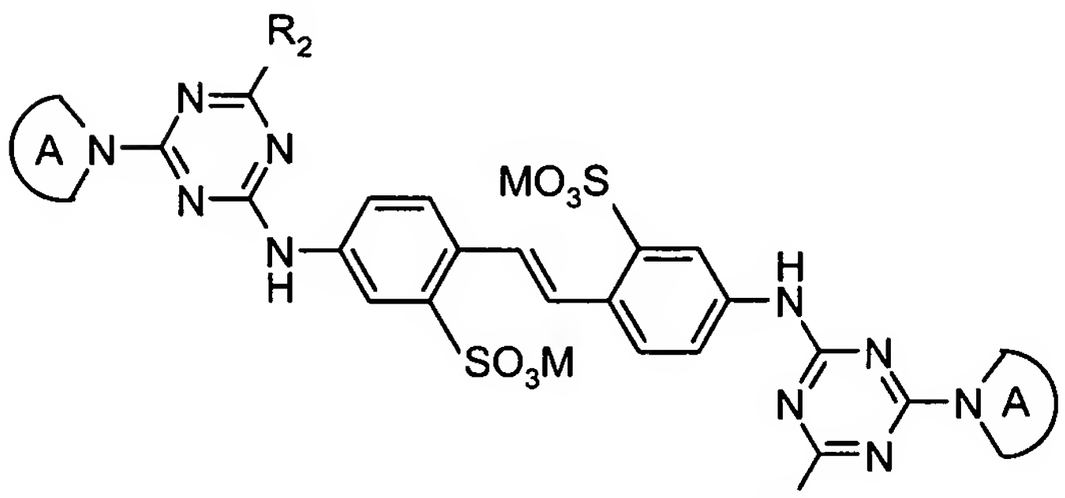
1. **(currently amended)** A fluorescent whitening agent, which comprises a mixture of compounds of the formulae



(1a),



(1b) and



(1c),

R_2

in which

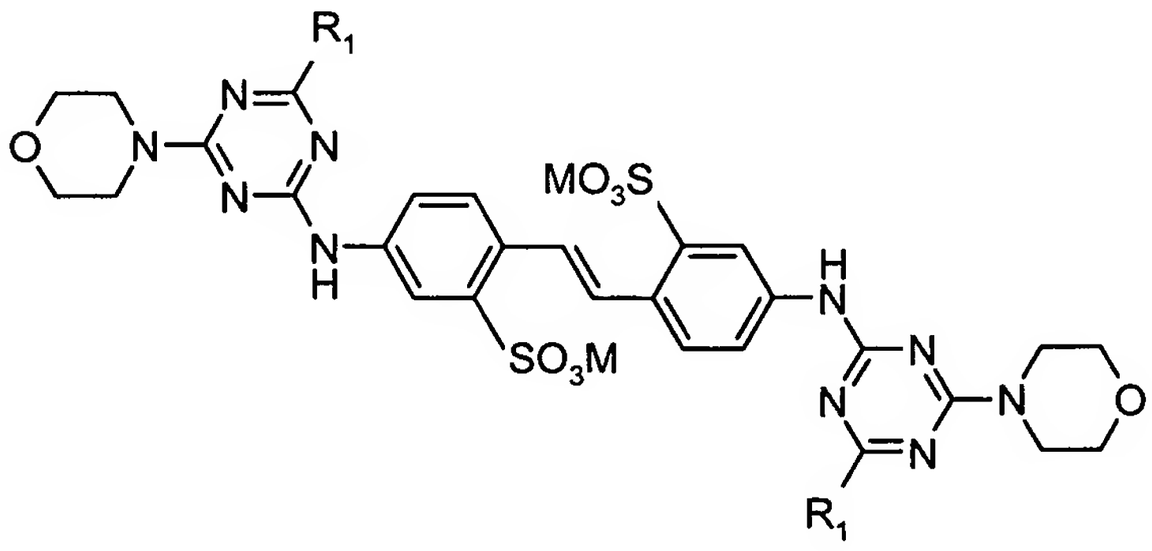
R_1 and R_2 are different and ~~each represents~~

R_1 is $-NH_2$, $-NHC_1$-C_4alkyl, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)_2$, $-NHC_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl, $-N(C_2$-C_4hydroxyalkyl$)_2$, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)(C_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl), a morpholino residue or an amino acid or an amino acid amide residue from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group,

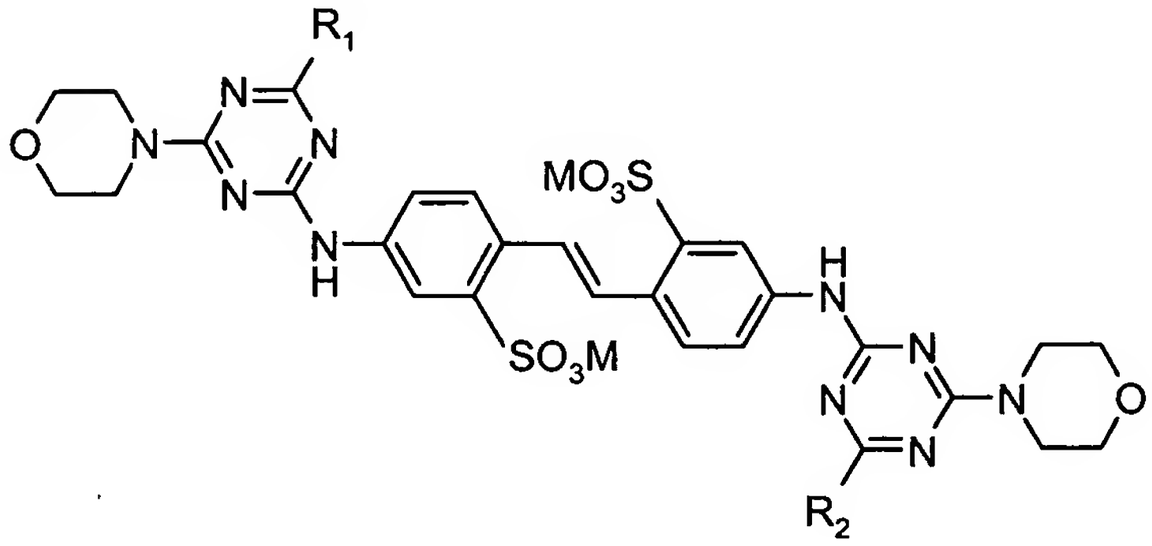
R_2 is an amino acid or an amino acid amide residue from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group,

each of the rings designated as A represent a 5- or 6-membered saturated heterocycle, which may contain one further heteroatom and M represents hydrogen, an alkali metal atom, ammonium or a cation formed from an amine.

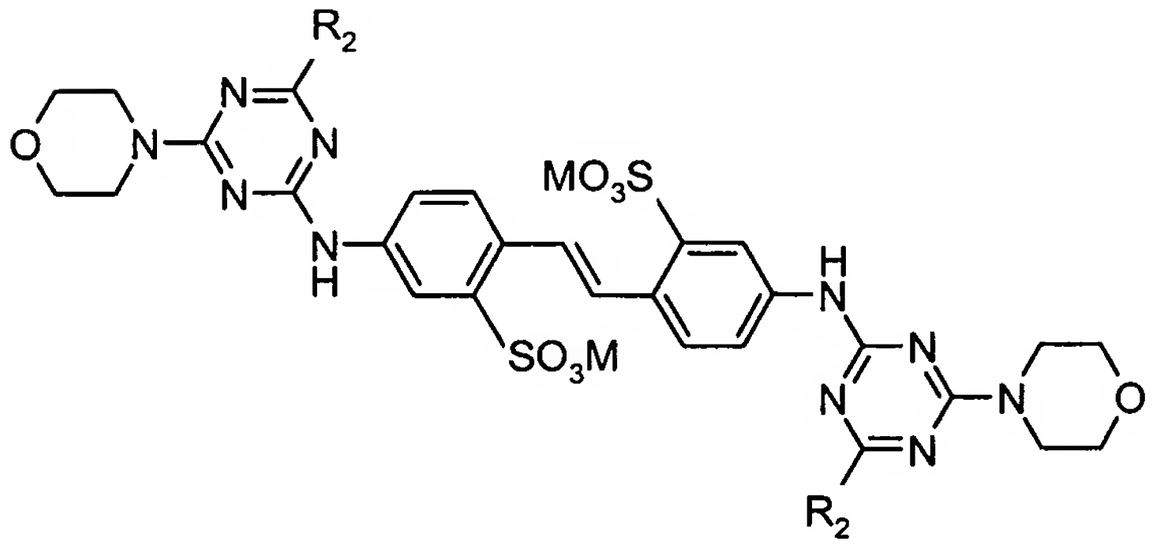
2. **(currently amended)** A fluorescent whitening agent, according to claim 1, which comprises a mixture of compounds of the formulae



(2a),



(2b) and



(2c)

[[,]] .

~~in which~~

~~R_1, R_2 and M are as defined in claim 1.~~

3. **(currently amended):** A ~~composition~~ fluorescent whitening agent according to claim 1, in which the aliphatic amino acid or amino acid amide residue is of the formula

$-NR_3-CH(CO_2H)-R_3$ (3) or $-NR_3-CH_2CH_2CONH_2$ (4),

in which each

R_3 and $R_{3'}$, independently, represent hydrogen or a group having the formula

$-CHR_4R_5$ in which

R_4 and R_5, independently, are hydrogen or C_1-C_4alkyl optionally substituted by one or two substituents selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, thio, methylthio, amino, carboxy, sulfo, phenyl, 4-hydroxyphenyl, 3,5-diiodo-4-hydroxyphenyl, β-indolyl, β-imidazolyl and $NH=C(NH_2)NH$-.

4. **(currently amended)** A ~~composition~~ fluorescent whitening agent according to claim 3, in which residues R_1 and/or R_2 are derived from glycine, alanine, sarcosine, serine, cysteine, phenylalanine, tyrosine (4-hydroxyphenylalanine), diiodotyrosine, tryptophan (β-indolylalanine), histidine ((β-imidazolylalanine), α-aminobutyric acid, methionine, valine (α-aminoisovaleric acid), norvaline, leucine (α-aminoisocaproic acid), isoleucine (α-amino-β-methylvaleric acid), norleucine (α-amino-n-caproic acid), arginine, ornithine (α,δ-diaminovaleric acid), lysine (α,ε-diaminocaproic acid), aspartic acid (aminosuccinic acid), glutamic acid (α-aminoglutaric acid), threonine, hydroxyglutamic acid and taurine, as well as mixtures and optical isomers thereof, or from iminodiacetic acid or from N-(propionamido)-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)amine.

5. **(currently amended)** A ~~composition~~ fluorescent whitening agent according to claim 1, in which

R_1 is ~~and R_2 represent~~ -$N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)_2$, -NHC_2-C_4hydroxyalkyl, -$N(C_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl$)_2$, -$N(C_1$-C_4alkyl)(C_2- C_4hydroxyalkyl), a morpholino residue or a residue derived from glycine, sarcosine, taurine, glutamic acid, aspartic acid, iminodiacetic acid or from N-(propionamido)-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)amine.

6. **(currently amended)** A ~~composition~~ fluorescent whitening agent according to claim 5 in which

R_1 represents a mono-(2-hydroxyethyl)amino, a di-(2-hydroxyethyl)amino, a di-(2-hydroxypropyl)amino, a diethylamino, an N-(2-hydroxyethyl)-N-methylamino, a morpholino, an N-(propionamido)-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)amino or a sarcosine residue and

R_2 represents an aspartic acid or a glycine residue.

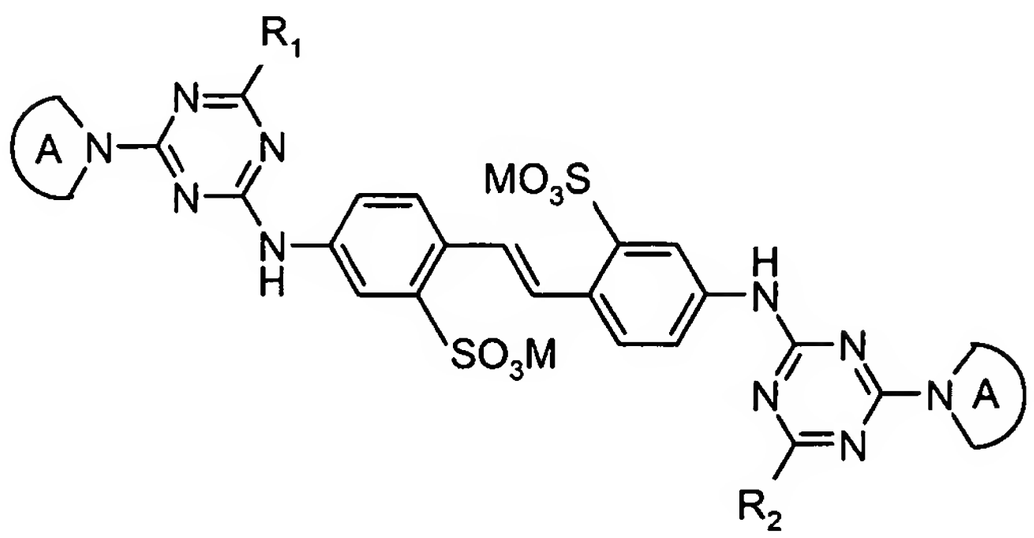
7. **(currently amended)** A ~~composition~~ fluorescent whitening agent according to claim 1, in which

M represents hydrogen, lithium, potassium, sodium, ammonium, mono-, di-, tri- or tetra-C_1-C_4alkylammonium, mono-, di- or tri-C_1-C_4hydroxyalkylammonium or ammonium that is di- or tri-substituted with a mixture of C_1-C_4alkyl and C_1-C_4hydroxyalkyl groups.

8. **(currently amended)** A ~~composition~~ according to claim 7, in which
M represents hydrogen, potassium or sodium.

9. **(currently amended)** A process for preparing ~~the preparation of~~ the fluorescent whitening agent ~~compound mixture~~ mixture of compounds of formulae (1a), (1b) and (1c) according to claim 1 by reacting, under known reaction conditions, cyanuric chloride~~, successively, in any desired sequence,~~ with each of 4,4'-diaminostilbene-2,2'-disulphonic acid, an appropriate heterocyclic compound, an amino compound R_1H and an amino compound R_2H, or, alternatively a mixture of amino compounds R_1H and R_2H.~~, R_1 and R_2 being as defined in claim 1~~.

10. **(currently amended)** A compound of the formula



(1b),

in which

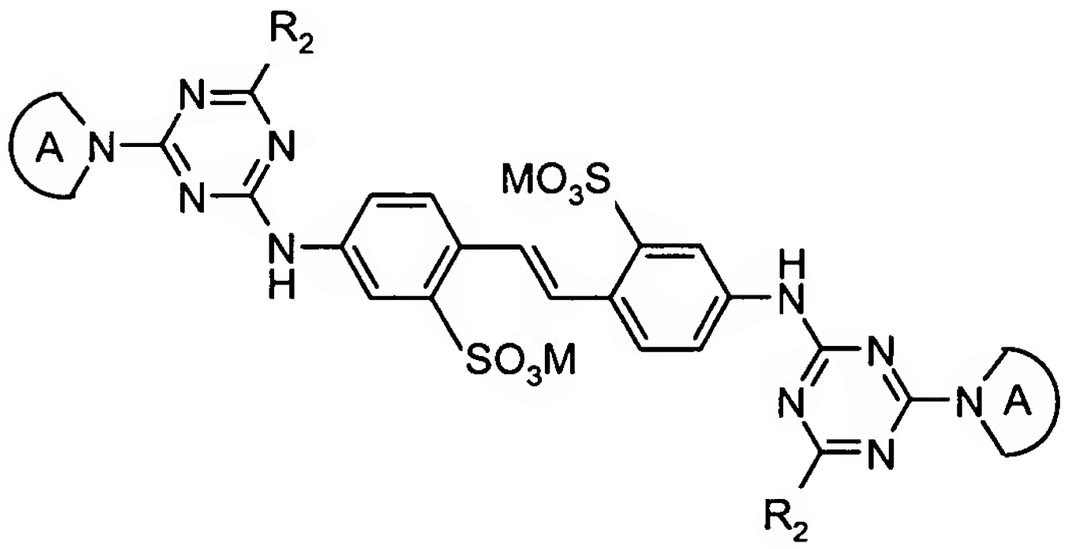
~~R_1, R_2, A and M are as defined in claim 1.~~R_1 and R_2 are different and

R_1 is $-NH_2$, $-NHC_1$-C_4alkyl, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)_2$, $-NHC_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl, $-N(C_2$-C_4hydroxyalkyl$)_2$, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)(C_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl), a morpholino residue or an amino acid or an amino acid amide residue from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group,

R_2 is an amino acid or an amino acid amide residue from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group,

each of the rings designated as A represent a 5- or 6-membered saturated heterocycle, which may contain one further heteroatom and M represents hydrogen, an alkali metal atom, ammonium or a cation formed from an amine.

11. **(currently amended)** A compound of formula



(1c),

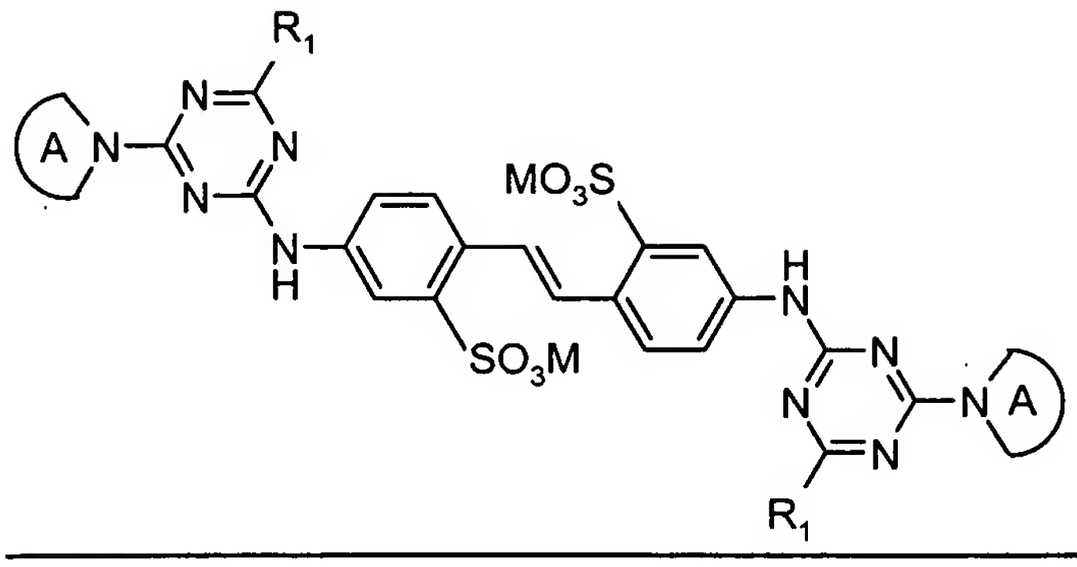
in which

R_2 is an amino acid or amino acid derivative from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group, whereby the residue is derived from alanine, sarcosine, serine, cysteine, phenylalanine, tyrosine (4-hydroxyphenylalanine), diiodotyrosine, tryptophan (β-indolylalanine), histidine (β-imidazolylalanine), α-aminobutyric acid, methionine, valine (α-aminoisovaleric acid), norvaline, leucine (α-aminoisocaproic acid), isoleucine (α-amino-β-methylvaleric acid), norleucine (α-amino-n-caproic acid), arginine, ornithine (α,δ-diaminovaleric acid), lysine (α,ε-diaminocaproic acid), aspartic acid (aminosuccinic acid), glutamic acid (α-aminoglutaric acid), threonine or hydroxyglutamic acid, as well as mixtures and optical isomers thereof, or from iminodiacetic acid or from N-(propionamido)-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)amine or the corresponding propionic acid~~, the heterocyclic ring~~

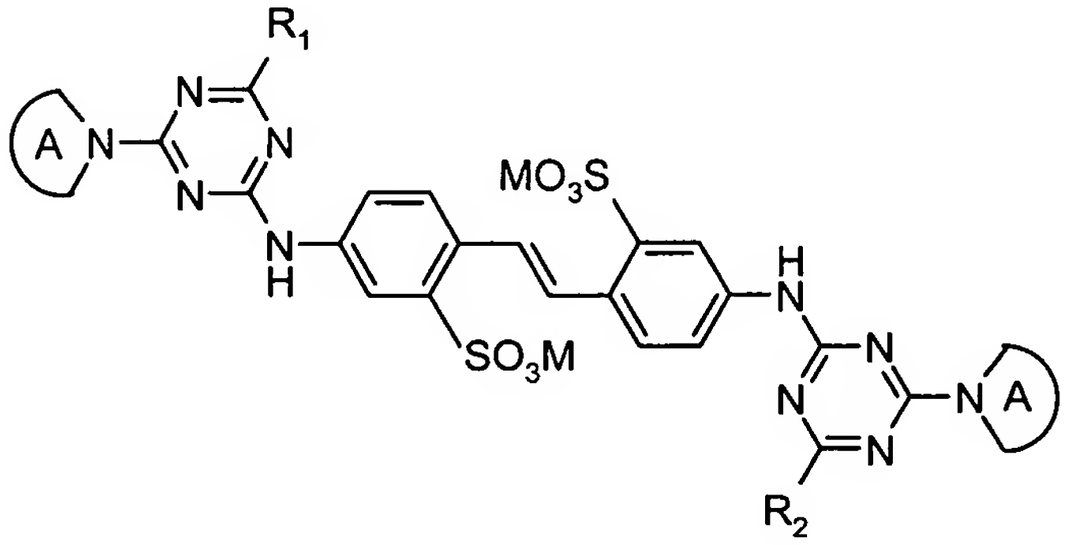
~~A and the symbol M being as defined in claim 1.~~

each of the rings designated as A represent a 5- or 6-membered saturated heterocycle, which may contain one further heteroatom and M represents hydrogen, an alkali metal atom, ammonium or a cation formed from an amine.

12. **(currently amended)** A method for whitening synthetic or natural organic material by treating the synthetic or natural material with a composition, which contains water, a fluorescent whitening agent, which comprises a mixture of the compounds (1a), (1b) and (1c), ~~according to claim 1,~~ a compound of formula (1b) or a compound of formula (1c)

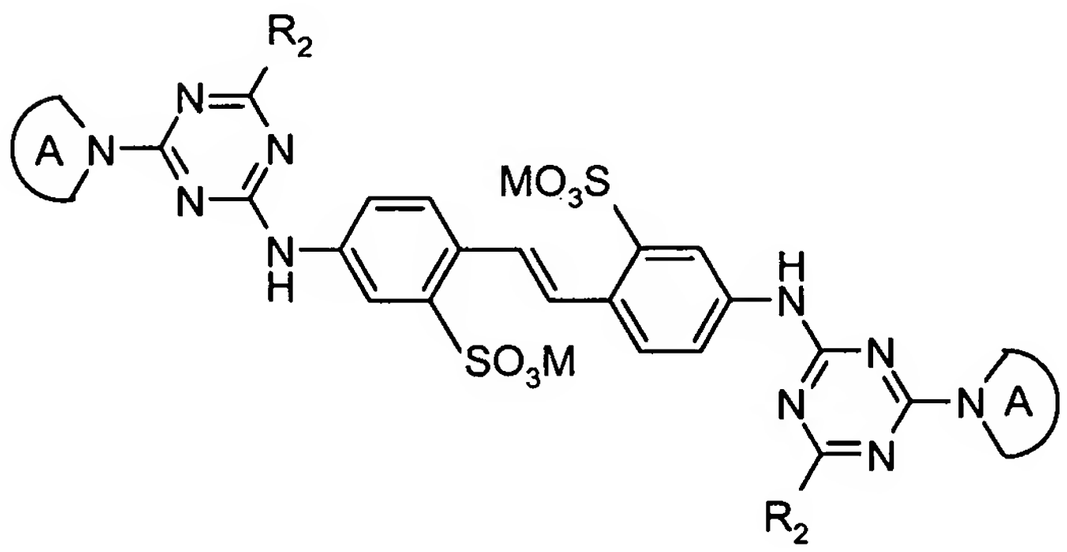


(1a),



(1b),

or a compound of formula (1c)



(1c),

in which

R_1 and R_2 are different and

R_1 is $-NH_2$, $-NHC_1$-C_4alkyl, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)_2$, $-NHC_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl, $-N(C_2$-C_4hydroxyalkyl$)_2$, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)(C_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl), a morpholino residue or an amino acid or an amino acid amide residue from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group,

R_2 is an amino acid or amino acid derivative from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group, whereby the residue is derived from alanine, sarcosine, serine, cysteine, phenylalanine, tyrosine (4-hydroxyphenylalanine), diiodotyrosine, tryptophan (β-indolylalanine),

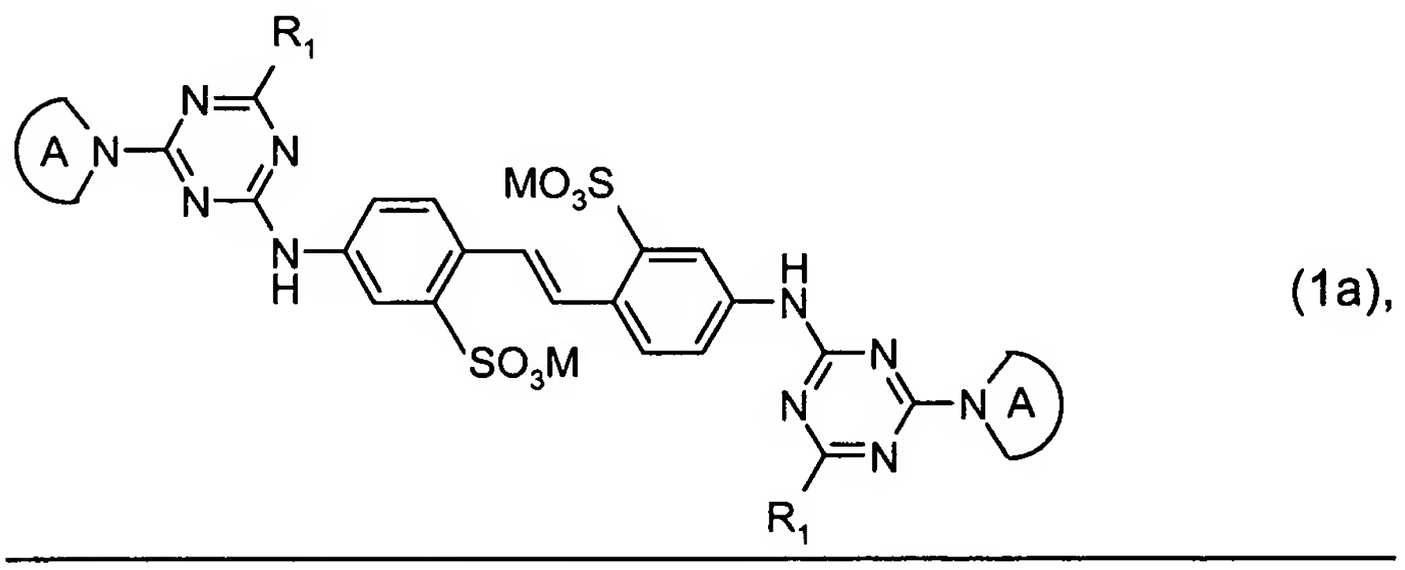
histidine (β-imidazolylalanine), α-aminobutyric acid, methionine, valine (α-aminoisovaleric acid), norvaline, leucine (α-aminoisocaproic acid), isoleucine (α-amino-β-methylvaleric acid), norleucine (α-amino-n-caproic acid), arginine, ornithine (α,δ-diaminovaleric acid), lysine (α,ε-diaminocaproic acid), aspartic acid (aminosuccinic acid), glutamic acid (α-aminoglutaric acid), threonine or hydroxyglutamic acid, as well as mixtures and optical isomers thereof, or from iminodiacetic acid or from N-(propionamido)-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)amine or the corresponding propionic acid,

each of the rings designated as A represent a 5- or 6-membered saturated heterocycle, which may contain one further heteroatom and M represents hydrogen, an alkali metal atom, ammonium or a cation formed from an amine

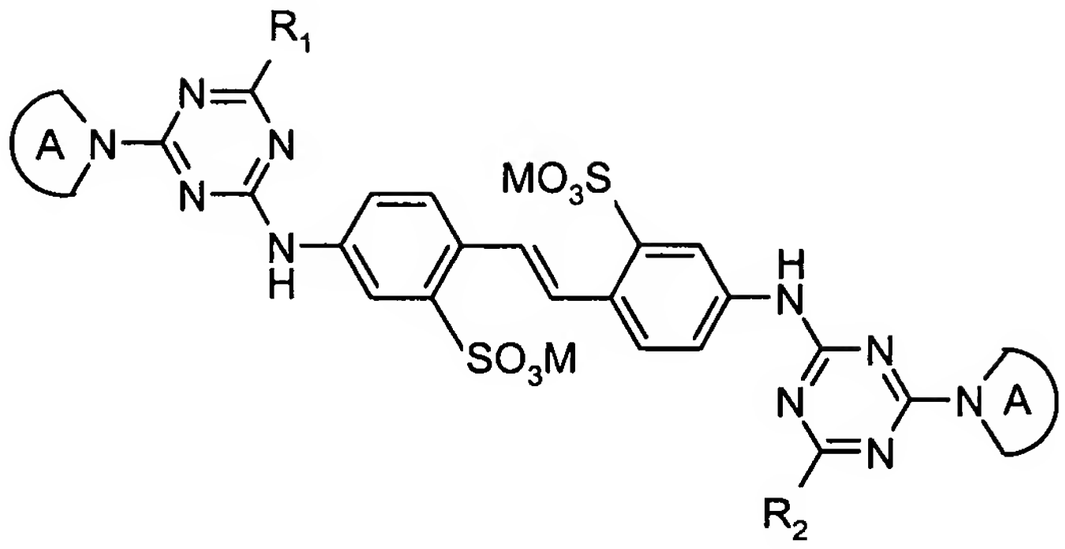
and, optionally, auxiliaries.

13. **(currently amended)** A method according to claim 12 for whitening of paper comprising applying to the paper substrate in the pulp mass, in the form of a paper coating composition, or directly in the size press or metering press a mixture of compounds (1a), (1b) and (1c), a compound (1b) or a compound (1c) ~~according to claim 12~~.

14. **(currently amended)** Paper, which has been optically brightened by the compound mixture of formulae (1a), (1b) and (1c) ~~according to claim 1~~, a compound of formula (1b) or a compound of formula (1c)

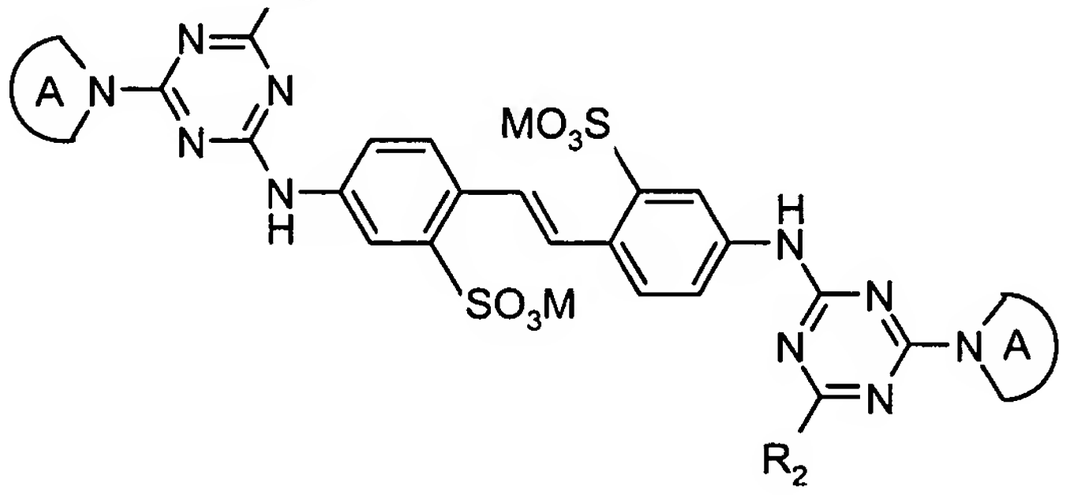


(1a),



(1b),

~~or a compound of formula (1c)~~



(1c),

in which

R_1 and R_2 are different and

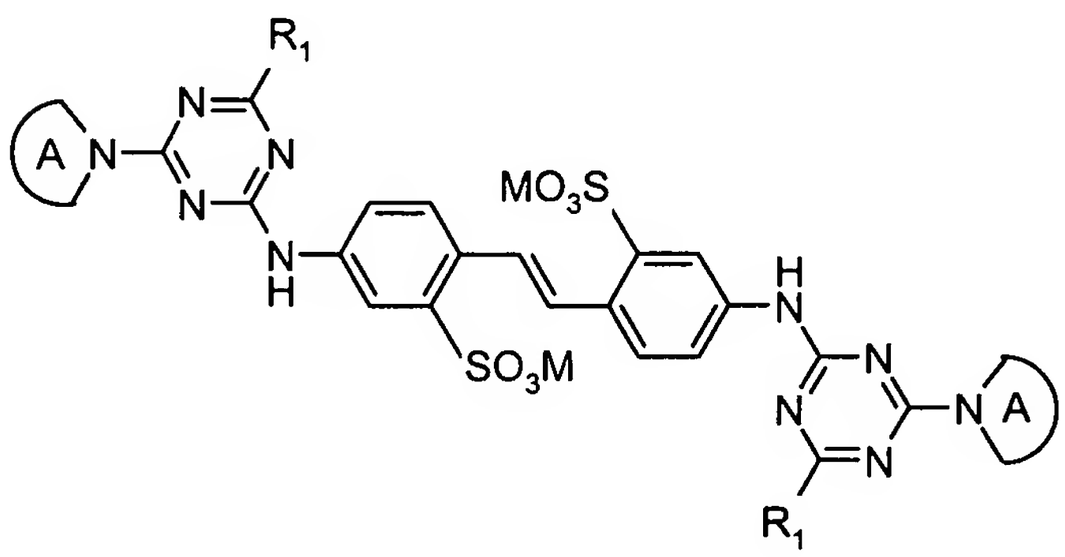
R_1 is $-NH_2$, $-NHC_1$-C_4alkyl, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)_2$, $-NHC_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl, $-N(C_2$-C_4hydroxyalkyl$)_2$, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)(C_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl), a morpholino residue or an amino acid or an amino acid amide residue from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group,

R_2 is an amino acid or amino acid derivative from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group, whereby the residue is derived from alanine, sarcosine, serine, cysteine, phenylalanine, tyrosine (4-hydroxyphenylalanine), diiodotyrosine, tryptophan (β-indolylalanine), histidine (β-imidazolylalanine), α-aminobutyric acid, methionine, valine (α-aminoisovaleric acid), norvaline, leucine (α-aminoisocaproic acid), isoleucine (α-amino-β-methylvaleric acid), norleucine (α-amino-n-caproic acid), arginine, ornithine (α,δ-diaminovaleric acid), lysine (α,ε-diaminocaproic acid), aspartic acid (aminosuccinic acid), glutamic acid (α-aminoglutaric acid), threonine or hydroxyglutamic acid, as well as mixtures and optical isomers thereof, or from iminodiacetic acid or from N-(propionamido)-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)amine or the corresponding propionic acid, ~~the heterocyclic ring.~~

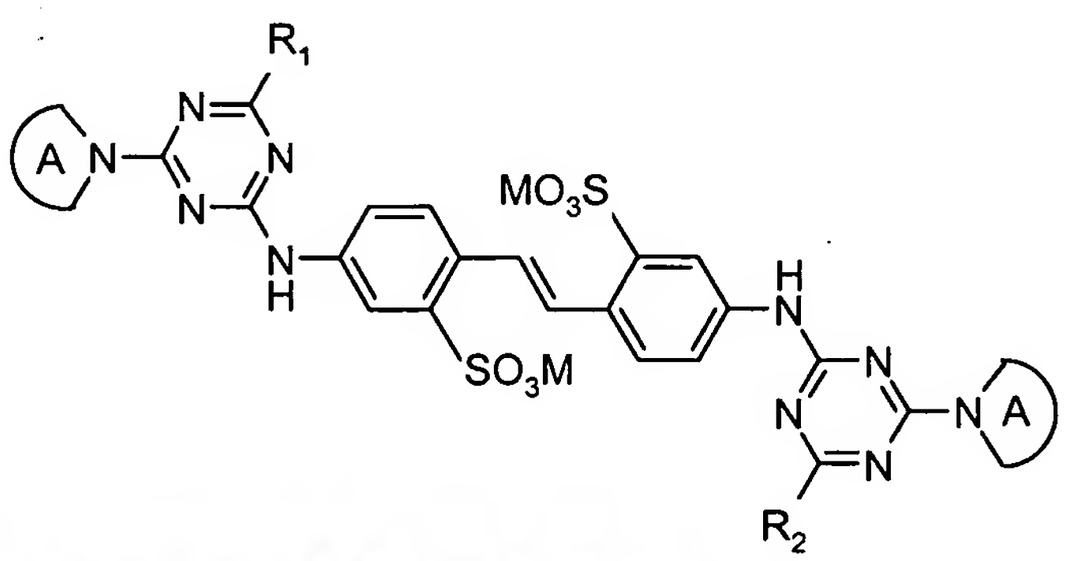
each of the rings designated as A represent a 5- or 6-membered saturated heterocycle, which may contain one further heteroatom and M represents hydrogen, an alkali metal atom, ammonium or a cation formed from an amine.

15. **(previously presented)** A method according to claim 12, for increasing the Sun Protection Factor (SPF) rating or for the fluorescent whitening of a textile fibre materials.

16. **(currently amended)** A textile fabric produced from a fibre treated with the compound mixture of formulae (1a), (1b) and (1c) ~~according to claim 1~~, a compound of formula (1b) or a compound of formula (1c)

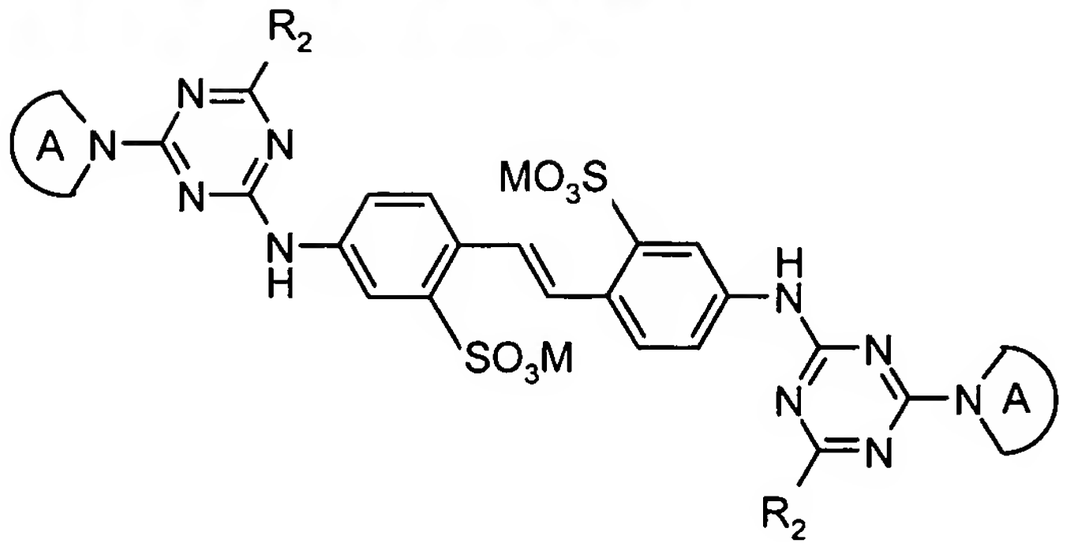


(1a),



(1b),

~~or a compound of formula (1c)~~



(1c),

in which R_1 and R_2 are different and

R_1 is $-NH_2$, $-NHC_1$-C_4alkyl, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)_2$, $-NHC_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl, $-N(C_2$-C_4hydroxyalkyl$)_2$, $-N(C_1$-C_4alkyl$)(C_2$-C_4 hydroxyalkyl), a morpholino residue or an amino acid or an amino acid amide residue from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group,

R_2 is an amino acid or amino acid derivative from which a hydrogen atom has been removed from the amino group, whereby the residue is derived from alanine, sarcosine, serine, cysteine, phenylalanine, tyrosine (4-hydroxyphenylalanine), diiodotyrosine, tryptophan (β-indolylalanine), histidine (β-imidazolylalanine), α-aminobutyric acid, methionine, valine (α-aminoisovaleric acid), norvaline, leucine (α-aminoisocaproic acid), isoleucine (α-amino-β-methylvaleric acid), norleucine (α-amino-n-caproic acid), arginine, ornithine (α,δ-diaminovaleric acid), lysine (α,ε-diaminocaproic acid), aspartic acid (aminosuccinic acid), glutamic acid (α-aminoglutaric acid), threonine or hydroxyglutamic acid, as well as mixtures and optical isomers thereof, or from iminodiacetic acid or from N-(propionamido)-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)amine or the corresponding propionic acid, ~~the heterocyclic ring .~~

each of the rings designated as A represent a 5- or 6-membered saturated heterocycle, which may contain one further heteroatom and M represents hydrogen, an alkali metal atom, ammonium or a cation formed from an amine.